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Sent: 8/31/2017 11:18:48 PM
To: Eoc, Epahq [Eoc.Epahq@epa.gov]
Subject: EOC Spot Report Update #1: Region 6, Arkema Chemical Explosion, Crosby, TX (NRC#1188881)

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EOC Spot Report: Region 6, Arkema Chemical Explosion, Crosby, TX (NRC#1188881) - Update #1

US Environmental Protection Agency
Report as of August 31, 2017 at 1920 EDT

Overview: At approximately 0345 EDT on August 31, 2017, two loud popping sounds were reported at the Arkema Chemical Facility. According to local responders one of the eight refrigerated trailers on site auto-ignited and is burning. Officials report that it is impossible to know for sure whether an explosion occurred since employees were not on site, but warn that the threat of additional fires or explosions remains. The facility's coolant system for the organic peroxide tanks and backup generators failed due to flooding from Tropical Storm Harvey. An evacuation order is still in effect for residents within a 1.5 mile-radius of the facility on August 30. As of 1730 EDT on August 31, three additional peroxide trailers are close to critical temperature. Those three trailers are reportedly within thirty feet of each other. Arkema is a Risk Management Plan (RMP) facility. It manufactures organic peroxides and two substances, sulfur dioxide (anhydrous) and 2-methylpropene are present at, or above, the minimum threshold quantity for RMP applicability. There have been no accidental off-site releases of applicable RMP chemicals from the facility in the previous five years.

State, Local and other Federal Agency Actions: Harris County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management is conducting air monitoring in the area. The Harris County Fire Department is maintaining a 1.5-mile evacuation order around the facility. Poison Control Centers are set up in Texas to help citizens who have health concern questions concerning the Arkema facility or other flood-related health questions.

EPA Actions: EPA has deployed an On-Scene Coordinator (OSC) to the scene. EPA emergency response personnel in Texas are in direct contact with first responders in Harris County and are providing federal assistance and resources. EPA Region 6 is working with the FEMA Interagency Modeling Atmospheric Assessment Center (IMAAC) on modeling of anticipated future releases at the site. The modeling products are being delivered to Unified Command.

On August 30, EPA ASPECT aircraft conducted its initial overflight of the Arkema facility and did not detect any vapors or thermal abnormalities. ASPECT was deployed again today, August 31, to provide near real-time information to the OSC. EPA is also sending additional air monitoring personnel and equipment to augment the current effort of the state and local first responders. Monitoring teams from the Houston area are expected on-scene this morning.

Media Interest: High

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-nation/wp/2017/08/30/texas-town-under-emergency-evacuation-as-flooded-chemical-plant-nears-explosion/?utm_term=.ac2f2ab8e452&wpisrc=al_alert-national&wpmk=1

<http://www.foxnews.com/us/2017/08/31/question-is-when-chemical-plant-outside-houston-could-explode-company-says.html>

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/arkema-report-said-chemical-could-put-one-million-at-risk-1504215571>

<https://www.cnbc.com/2017/08/31/houston-area-us-congressman-more-blasts-expected-in-coming-days-at-arkema-chemical-plant.html>

HQ EOC will continue to monitor and provide updates as warranted.

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